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ABSTRACT

In 1985, the Global Method of Structural Analysis (GMSA) for teaching reading was introduced to first and second graders in Mexico. Breaking away from the more traditional educational methods, it established a basis for more flexible education and effectively utilized critical thinking skills. The preparation stage (reading readiness) begins in pre-school or kindergarten and continues throughout the GMSA process. Global perception of enunciation corresponds to the program's first unit. The second stage involves the manipulation of pieces of the enunciation, followed by an analysis and synthesis of the word, in relation to the structure of the word and of the whole enunciation. The final stage is the reading of texts (reading assertion) during which time the child acquires speed and rhythm in reading. Today, GMSA has been demonstrated to be most adequate in responding to the needs, interests and cognitive development of Mexican children age 6 to 8. It also takes into consideration the Mexican child's culture. Adherence to the more traditional methods have given rise to some problems, but GMSA's excellent results are cause for optimism.
(JMM)

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TEACHING READING
MEXICO'S GLOBAL METHOD OF STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

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In 1985, the application of the "Global Method of Structural Analysis" (GMSA) for the teaching of reading was introduced in Mexico in the first and second grades to replace the old, dated, "Onomatopoetic" and "Eclectic" methods. With it, Mexico not only broke away from traditional educational methods that did not consider current knowledge of the psychological development of the child, but also established the basis for a more flexible and critical thinking type of education which more effectively utilizes critical thinking skills.

There are psychological, pedagogical and linguistic implications for the GMSA. From the beginning, during the acquisition of the reading and writing processes, the child's interest in learning is awakened. The child finds that, in learning to read, he is communicating his ideas and he is learning somebody else's. The child does not face any abstract signs without meaning or without art. In the GMSA, in reading, the phrase is understood and the written signs are transformed into spoken sounds which are meaningful to the child.

The structural grammar analyses (phonological, morphological, and syntactical) applied to the enunciations

in the primary schools study the language as a structure, as a group of interrelated elements which are understood as integrating parts of a whole. The program starts with complex groups of words (phrases and sentences) which then are subdivided (analysed) into smaller, syntactical units followed by the division into words, syllables, and then letter sounds (phono-analysis). With this, interrelations of the aforementioned elements are discovered and understood (heuristic learning) in their various aspects.

It can be said that the GMSA fulfills the principal objective of reading (and writing), that is, to teach the child to read and to express himself, and to communicate, while understanding everything he reads and writes. This is a logical result because, from the beginning, GMSA tends to provide the student with the habit of reading intelligently. At the same time, the method allows the development of habitual discernment, critical inclination, and promotes a liking for reading. In other words, the child is being taught how to read, but above all, he is being taught to think.

There is sequence to the GMSA. The preparation stage (reading readiness) is started in Pre-school or Kindergarten and is continued throughout the whole process of the GMSA. This psychoaffective, motor and cognitive preparation (readiness) initiates the learning of reading as well as writing. We know that not all children have this

¿Qué tienes?

Tengo una cabeza.

Tengo dos manos.



Tengo dos pies.

Recorta y pega.



Tengo dos manos.

Tengo una cabeza. Tengo dos pies.

12 5 ✂

5

The above illustrations are from the first book of the first grade. On the left is page 12 of the text with reference to page 5 of the workbook (cut and paste) on the right.

Los sentidos



Niño, vamos a cantar
una bonita canción;
yo te voy a preguntar,
tú me vas a responder.
— Los ojos, ¿para qué son?
— Los ojos son para ver.
— ¿Y el tacto? — Para tocar.
— ¿Y el oído? — Para oír.
— ¿Y el gusto? — Para gustar.
— ¿Y el olfato? — Para oler.
— ¿Y el alma? — Para sentir,
para querer y pensar.

Amado Nervo

This illustration is from the first reader of the first grade. The author is given at the bottom.

preparation from Pre-school or Kindergarten when they enter school (Mexico's public elementary schools are grades one through six). The global perception of the enunciation corresponds to the first unit of the program. The child learns to identify various enunciations (statements, expressions) as wholes. (See illustrations from the first text.)

A frequent criticism of the GMSA is that it is very difficult for the child to begin to read visualizing an enunciation because there are too many words in them. Contrary to what may be supposed, the global perception of enunciation is the easiest stage of the process. It is precisely so for having many words (more identifiers).

First there is the stage of analysis of the enunciation (Global Perception of the Word). It begins with the analysis of an enunciation and identifying words within it. This corresponds to the second unit of the program for the first grade, after the child can identify a number of enunciations. This stage involves some difficulty as he/she manipulates pieces of the enunciation. The student has already learned to identify enunciations. His maturity process is developing, and he/she begins to spontaneously feel the need to analyze everything. He identifies words. He first identifies those words that have a greater significance to him, and those that can be related to something that can be observed in a natural or graphic

manner (nouns, adjectives, verbs) then those that have a secondary function in the enunciation (prepositions, articles, etc.) but which are frequently repeated.

Next comes the stage of analysis and synthesis of the word. (This is the analysis of the word in syllables and letters). This is the most difficult (abstract) stage and requires the most maturity. During this stage, the student will know the role of letters and will learn how these make syllables. This will always be done in relation to the structure of the word, and at the same time in relation to the structure of the whole enunciation.

It is worth pointing out that the process of synthesis is simultaneous to the analysis. The student identifies a word, then he analyzes the word in syllables and then integrates (synthesis) the syllables into the words and the words into the enunciation.

The final stage is the reading of texts (Reading Assertion). In this last stage, the child knows the letters, syllables and words and is capable of reading texts without any visual aids. At this stage, some difficulties will prevail, such as compound syllables. However, the child acquires speed and rhythm in reading.

Mexico (San Miguel, 1983) makes some didactical recommendations to its teachers:

1. Always start with whole enunciations even when you are dealing with the learning of a letter.

2. Guide the child to express the enunciation himself that he/she will later visualize. Remember that the child's reading should correspond to his vocabulary.

3. Stimulate the motivation in the students. The children should feel the need and desire to read the enunciations. In an integrated program, this becomes easier because the enunciations correspond to subjects or projects, these fall within the student's interests (and that grade's curriculum).

4. Reinforce all teaching. The subjects taken up should be reinforced by constant reviews and varied exercises. The child in first grade understands very quickly. However, he easily forgets if there is no reinforcement. Reading is a continuous process. Upon the taking up of a new subject, the prior subjects should be reviewed.

5. Foment transference or the ability to use previous acquired knowledge in the acquisition of new knowledge. Have the students transfer previously learned material. This process can be presented without the teacher having to interfere. This can be done with help from visual aids used before.

6. Do not hurry the learning process. The child learns to read in proportion to his maturity. Do not force the child to learn.

7. Constantly evaluate the student's learning. This will allow you to guide them better.

8. Be creative. Use a variety of exercises; avoid monotony and rote learning.

9. When the student carries out observations to introduce him/herself to the subject and to put together enunciations, make sure the material is concrete. Initially, the student should manipulate, smell, taste, see, etc. the material. Make sure the students use pictures to illustrate written enunciations. Pictures are the intermediate stage (symbols) between the material objects and the written enunciations. Because of television, plus the visuals used today, the child can quickly move to pictures.

Today, in Mexico (San Miguel, 1983), the Global Method of Structural Analysis has been demonstrated to be most adequate. It's adequacy can be measured in that it responds to the interests, needs, and cognitive development of the child ages 6 through 8. (Age at which the learning to read and write is initiated). The application of this method in Mexico takes into consideration the Mexican child's culture. In the teaching-learning process, one considers the child's environment. In this sense, the school texts of Mexico have played an important role as didactic support. These texts have also allowed the homogeneity of the applied methodology (Mexico has a national educational system and free texts).

Finally, one should note that the difficulties that have arisen in Mexico in the application of the method have been primarily of traditional character, that is, adherence to old methods (in the U.S.A. we experienced this when we introduced the "New Math" methods as well as when we tried the "Audio Lingual Method" in the teaching of foreign languages). These problems are due to the fact that, in Mexico, the use of "synthetic" methods has prevailed for very many years. However, the teachers are becoming more and more convinced of the excellent results obtained with this, the Global Method of Structural Analysis and Mexico looks optimistically at its educational programs.

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